

Step-by-Step Instructions for Olympic Wushu Baguazhang

Baguazhang (Bagua Zhang) is a traditional Chinese martial art renowned for its circular walking, evasive footwork, and open palm techniques. In modern Wushu competition, Baguazhang forms are standardized but retain the art's characteristic movements. Below are step-by-step instructions for foundational Baguazhang practice, focusing on key elements used in Olympic-style Wushu^[1] ^[2] ^[3].

1. Establishing Basic Posture

- Stand with feet shoulder-width apart.
- Slightly bend your knees, sink your weight, and keep your spine straight.
- Relax your shoulders, hollow the chest slightly, and let the tailbone point downward.
- Bring your hands in front of you, palms open and facing each other at chest height, fingers relaxed and slightly spread^[2] ^[3].

2. Circle Walking (Zou Zhuan 圈步)

Circle walking is the signature practice of Baguazhang. It develops balance, agility, and the ability to generate power while moving.

- Imagine a large circle on the ground. Place yourself on the edge, facing the center.
- The inside foot (closest to the center) steps forward along the circle's edge, while the outside foot follows, maintaining a smooth, gliding motion^[4] ^[5].
- Keep your feet close to the ground (mud-sliding step), never lifting them high or showing the sole^[4] ^[5].
- As you walk, keep your upper body turned toward the center of the circle. Ideally, your hips face forward while your shoulders twist toward the center^[2].
- Maintain the Bagua palm shape: fingers vertical, palm "collapsed" (slightly cupped), and the "tiger's mouth" (space between thumb and index finger) rounded^[5].

3. Stepping Techniques

- **Tang Ni Bu (Mud Step):** Slide your foot forward over the ground, keeping it flat and parallel. This trains balance and stability^[4] ^[5].
- **Kou Bu (Hook Step):** Used to change direction. Step the rear foot across and in front of the leading foot, turning the toes inward about 90° to pivot your body^[2] ^[5].
- **Bai Bu (Swing Step):** After Kou Bu, swing the other foot around to continue the turn, maintaining balance and posture^[2] ^[5].

4. Turning and Direction Changes

- To reverse direction on the circle:
 - Perform a Kou Bu with the inside foot, turning your body 90°.
 - Follow with a Bai Bu using the outside foot, pivoting another 90°.
 - Bring your feet together and resume walking in the opposite direction^{[2] [5]}.
- Keep your body aligned and relaxed during the turn, maintaining the Bagua posture.

5. Basic Palm Changes

- The “Eight Mother Palms” are fundamental positions practiced while circle walking, each representing a different energy and application^[4].
- As you walk, alternate your palm positions, turning the waist and shoulders to direct the palms outward, upward, or downward as required by the form^{[6] [4]}.
- Practice smooth transitions between palm shapes, always linking hand movements with footwork and waist turning.

6. Drills for Beginners

- Practice stationary stepping: shift your weight from one foot to the other, lifting and placing each foot with control^{[2] [3]}.
- Practice linear stepping: step forward and back in a straight line, coordinating hands and feet^[2].
- Combine circle walking with palm changes, focusing on fluid, continuous movement.

“Baguazhang combines the maneuvers of the palms and stepping techniques, swaying and arcing-stepping for walking and turning, linking each step to the next, and using the waist and body to generate power.”^[6]

Summary Table: Key Baguazhang Steps

Step Name	Description	Key Points
Mud Step	Glide foot forward, close to ground	Balance, stability, no lifting
Kou Bu	Hook step to change direction	Cross foot, turn inward 90°
Bai Bu	Swing step to continue turn	Swing foot, maintain posture
Circle Walk	Walk along a circle, upper body faces center	Fluid, continuous, relaxed
Palm Change	Change hand positions while walking	Coordinate with waist/footwork

For more detailed visual instruction, refer to step-by-step video tutorials by Wushu coaches and international competitors^{[1] [2] [3]}. These resources break down each movement and provide drills to build proficiency in Olympic Wushu Baguazhang.



2. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tT16V0AAMFc>
3. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRvID8w0XPU>
4. <https://basingstokekarate.com/2013/11/03/baguazhang-and-boxing/>
5. <https://www.internalartsinternational.com/free/guo-ge-mins-basic-requirements-for-ba-gua-zhang/>
6. <https://ymaa.com/sites/default/files/book/sample/Baguazhang.pdf>